

Foreword

State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) are comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies to maintain the health and diversity of wildlife within a state, including species with low and declining populations. Plans are intended to be coordinated with other wildlife and natural resource agencies and organizations, as well as receive public input during their development and implementation.

Wyoming's abundant wildlife, native habitats, and outdoor recreational opportunities are defining features of the state. Wyoming is home to 120 species of mammals, 426 species of birds, 12 species of amphibians, 27 species of reptiles, 78 species of fish, probably several thousand species of invertebrates, and well over 13,100 species of plants (Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2005, NRCS Plant Database). Some of the largest migratory populations of big game animals in North America are found within the state (Sawyer et al. 2005). Wyoming also has among the highest participation rates in wildlife related recreation in the country. About 48% of Wyoming residents engage in wildlife viewing and about 28% of its population fishes or hunts (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2006). The state's natural splendor is a major attraction for visitors who annually spend approximately \$2.25 billion (The Conservation Fund 2007).

During the late 19th and early 20th century, North America experienced one of the greatest wildlife conservation success stories in history with the enactment of wildlife laws, which brought back many wildlife species from the brink of extinction as a result of unregulated harvest, commercial exploitation, and habitat loss. Concurrently, the establishment of wildlife agencies, a funding system for wildlife conservation and management through license sales and taxes on hunting and fishing equipment, wildlife and natural resource professions, and a host of non-profit conservation organizations combined to create arguably the most effective wildlife conservation system in the world.

In order for this success story to continue throughout the 21st century, new challenges must be met. Many past advancements occurred through improvements in understanding and application of wildlife conservation principles. In the future, the availability of suitable habitat will increasingly become the most limiting factor for maintaining viable wildlife populations as the human population grows and natural resource demands increase. Developing strategies to effectively address this concern will involve engaging partners and disciplines outside the traditional wildlife management field.

Accordingly, issues addressed and recommended conservation actions within Wyoming's SWAP frequently cross jurisdictional boundaries and involve a variety of interests and diverse natural resource users. Implementation of recommendations within the plan will require commitment and dialogue among numerous government agencies, landowners, industry, and the public. Wyoming's SWAP is planned to be revised every five years and will certainly evolve overtime as successes are expanded, shortcomings corrected, new information becomes available, threats change, and new partners become engaged.

Many organizations and individuals were involved in the 2010 revision of Wyoming's SWAP. Their names can be found at the end of the sections of the SWAP where they contributed. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is grateful for their time and expertise. Special recognition goes to:

**Wyoming Game and Fish Habitat
Technical Advisory Group**

**Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Nongame Section**

**Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Habitat Section**

Wyoming's State Wildlife Action Plan Inter-agency Advisory Team

Wyoming Natural Diversity Database

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